A SERMON,

PREACHED AT WELLFLEET, MARCH 9, 1800,

ON

The Sabbath after the Confirmation of the News of

THE DEATH OF

CAPT. WILLIAM CHIPMAN,

WHO WAS INHUMANLY MURDERED BY A PARTY OF RIGAUD'S PIRATES IN THE WEST-INDIES.

By LEVI WHITMAN, *A. M.*
Paſtor of the Church in *Wellfleet.*

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1800.

AGREED in ADAMS' LODGE of ancient, free, and accepted Maſons, that brother THOMAS HOLBROOK, brother WARREN ANSON KENRICK, and brother THOMAS HIGGINS, be a Committee to wait on the Rev. Mr. WHITMAN, and thank him for his Conſolatory Addreſs, delivered yeſterday in the afternoon, to the family of our deceaſed brother WILLIAM CHIPMAN and others, and requeſt a copy for the preſs.

THOMAS HOLBROOK,
WARREN A. KENRICK,
THOMAS HIGGINS.

WELLFLEET, *March* 10th, 1800.

GENTLEMEN,

YOUR polite requeſt, together with the former experience of your benevolence, conſtrains me to give you a copy of my Sermon, delivered the day before yeſterday in the afternoon, hoping for the exerciſe of your uſual candour to cover its imperfections. I am, with all due reſpect, your moſt obedient,

LEVI WHITMAN.

WELLFLEET, *March* 11th, 1800.

Mr. THOMAS HOLBROOK,
Dr. WARREN A. KENRICK,
Capt. THOMAS HIGGINS.

1 SAMUEL, iii. 18.

AND HE SAID, IT IS THE LORD, LET HIM DO WHAT SEEMETH HIM GOOD.

IN this world there is a variety of changes, which, however contrary they may be to the inclinations of men, are accomplished or brought to pass by a power that human nature, with its most exalted qualifications, is unable to control. For the power exerted in these great and mighty operations is nothing less than infinite and divine. It is the great Jehovah, who has created and brought into existence the universe; and he alone, being infinitely wise, has a right to govern with a divine prerogative. Of the truth, that God possesses all possible excellence and every holy perfection in the highest degree, we need no other evidence, than that which is afforded by a wise and rational consideration of his works, as they are exhibited either in nature, providence, or grace.

MAN indeed is inadequate to a full and comprehensive view of all the things, which are contained in the divine mind, when God appears in his sovereign dispensations. Yet notwithstanding this is strictly true, there are not any, possessing rational faculties, who may not, if they wisely consider, dis-

cover enough of the pleaſure and will of their heavenly Father for the proper regulation of their lives and conduct; more eſpecially if they are aſſiſted by divine revelation. In all things the goodneſs of the ſupreme Being may be obſerved, though we may be in heavineſs, and in ſome particulars under grievous trials. For our afflictions are never ſo ſevere, as to leave us without comfortable reflections; and we ſoon perceive, that God bindeth up as well as maketh ſore; and that though he woundeth, yet that his hands make whole.

The great God, by the conſtitution of nature, which he has eſtabliſhed, has cauſed his goodneſs therein to be diſcovered. It is agreeable to this law of God, that the ſun, moon, and ſtars exiſt in their courſes; that ſeed-time and harveſt, cold and heat, winter and ſummer, continue in their order; ſo that the earth yields her increaſe, and men and beaſts are preſerved.

Providence or the divine care is exerciſed over the kingdom of nature: otherwiſe all things would fall into confuſion: this we are aſſured of: and yet divine providence either orders or permits things, which we could not account for, was it not for the light communicated by revelation concerning a better world; and even with this aſſiſtance, we are extremely perplexed to diſcover why it is that God ſometimes cuts off from among the living thoſe, who have not ſinned after the ſimilitude of Adam's tranſgreſſion; and at other times removes thoſe, who are either now in the midſt of

their days and uſefulneſs, or who bid fair ſoon to be diſtinguiſhed ornaments in ſociety. It may be much more difficult for us to perceive how it happens in the courſe of providence, that God ſometimes permits innocence to ſuffer by the hand of rapine; even as Abel, whoſe innocent blood cried from the ground, when ſhed by a murderous brother: neither could we underſtand this, was it not for that univerſal benevolence, which has appeared in the diſpenſations of grace, by which we are convinced that everlaſting and permanent felicity is to be enjoyed in a future ſtate only; and that there is no way of being introduced into it, but through the gate of death. This being the caſe, it is of little conſequence in what manner we are removed, provided it be by death, the only way in which ſaints are admitted to glory.

WHILST we are contemplating theſe things and are exerciſed with ſorrow, we ſhould do well to remember that the providence of the God of nature is connected with grace, and that his care is exerciſed in all the great and important alterations which are made. If ſo, if all the great changes, which are produced, are under the ſuperintendence of providence, there is then need of a firm faith in him, who, notwithſtanding the appearance of things, is good to all, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works; and we ſhould be perſuaded that the Judge of all the earth cannot do otherwiſe than what is perfectly right.

A FIRM dependence upon the providence and goodneſs of God, is of importance to us, more eſ-

pecially when he ſmites us with the rod of affliction. It helps us to bear our trials with more patience and reſignation to the divine will, and cauſes us to conduct more like chriſtians. This I mention becauſe we are named after Chriſt, who, through the whole of his miniſtry upon earth, was an example of patience, under all the ſorrows of life, and who, that he might fit us to bear affliction with courage, and to paſs through the difficulties of this world with reſolution, has removed out of our way all cauſes of impatience and fear. With propriety then may we conſider what has been done for us by this great captain of our ſalvation, who has emphatically laid a foundation for comfort under all the trials of the preſent life.

The guilt of ſin and the fear of puniſhment would be intolerable, were it not for what Chriſt has done in the purchaſe of pardon and in the reconciliation of ſinners. Indeed we have great comfort, ſince we know that we have with the Father an advocate, who is the propitiation for the ſins of the world. By this conſideration our troubles are greatly alleviated, when we are exerciſed with them. Before the death of Chriſt, and his reſurrection from the dead, death had a much more gloomy aſpect than it has under the goſpel. Before the information of life and immortality by Jeſus Chriſt, death was much more the king of terrors, than he is ſince his ſting has been taken away.

We are taught by the knowledge, which we have of the patience and ſuffering of Chriſt, to

bear our trials with reſignation in every particular, in which the will of God is expreſſed ; ſince in theſe things our Saviour has ſet us an example that we ſhould follow his ſteps. For ſince he has in mercy accompliſhed the work of our redemption, we can have a much more cordial acquieſcence in the divine allotments, or in the ſupreme diſpoſal of us and ours.

Good old Eli had a reſigned temper of mind, although the ſevere things, which were contained in the meſſage from God, and delivered by Samuel, were in conſequence of his neglect, in not warning his ſons, whom he knew had tranſgreſſed the divine precepts ; for his ſons had made themſelves vile, and he had not reſtrained them. But when he ſaw what the Lord was about to accompliſh, agreeable to the prediction of the younger prophet, in the language of religious ſubmiſſion he ſaid, It is the Lord : let him do what ſeemeth him good. When we meet with afflictions, we may not be under the ſame condemnation, which the ſubmiſſive old Eli was : yet let this be as it may, whenever we are tried with diſagreeable things, of whatever name or nature, the beſt diſpoſition for us is to adopt the ſentiment and language of that portion of divine inſpiration, which is choſen for the ſubject of our meditations at this time.

Among the various trials of time, there are ſome which appear evidently to be from the hand of God ; whilſt there are others, that are in oppoſition, or are almoſt contrary to the laws of nature,

and of courſe are not conſonant to, and do not comport with, what might be expected as the natural reſult of things. And hence ſome of our trials are grievous and hard to be borne. Neglecting or leaving for the preſent thoſe operations of the Almighty, which are common and which are produced agreeable to the fixed laws of nature, let us attend unto and conſider thoſe extraordinary things, which the God of providence either orders or permits for his glory and the good of his creatures. Such an exerciſe will naturally create in our minds the higheſt reverence of the divine power, and expand our ideas of the ſupreme greatneſs of God. It will excite our fears; ſo that we ſhall be extremely careful that we do not violate the laws of God. It will help us to bear with more fortitude of mind thoſe difficult things, which we do not fully underſtand. And finally it will cauſe us to reſemble thoſe examples, which have been ſet for our imitation.

Indeed how greatly ſhould we be aſſiſted, if we could conſider all the diſpenſations of providence as the reſult of infinite wiſdom, and as what may through the divine agency be made to work for our benefit, notwithſtanding we cannot order our ſpeech by reaſon of darkneſs, our troubles being ſo great, and our infirmities ſo many. For ſometimes, under dark and melancholy circumſtances, we find it difficult to acquieſce in or comprehend the reaſon of God's ſovereign dealings, in ſome of his extraordinary ſevere diſpenſations. How then can we do better than to conſider God as a God

of knowledge as well as power, and that whatever takes place in the world is under the control and guidance of a being, who knows perfectly all things from the beginning to the end thereof, and whose wisdom and benevolence are as extensive as his power? By such reflections as these we may be brought to conclude that whatever God does or permits to be done, may be for the best, and is capable of being, by the love of God, sanctified to us for our most important advantage. Of this truth we may be assured, if we consider the power and goodness of God, as they are exhibited in the books of Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, and other parts of the sacred writings. For God exerts not only his power, but his goodness also, many times, even whilst he is trying his servants with grievous distresses; so that light arises to them out of providential darkness. God indeed can cause the afflictions, which we meet with, to work out for us a far more exceeding and an eternal weight of glory; and through his favour the way is open for the reception of comfort, how great soever our trials may be.

We are often in this life exercised with trials, which cause sorrow and heaviness of heart; but there is a way, through the goodness of God, in which they may be borne and made profitable to us, provided right methods are taken, and we religiously and rationally remember that there is no evil of affliction in a city, and the Lord hath not done it; and that affliction cometh not forth of

the duſt, neither doth trouble ſpring out of the ground; or indeed that there is no trial, with which we are exerciſed, but what is either from the efficient or permiſſive hand of divine power. Connected with the knowledge of theſe things, there ought to be endeavours and deſires to improve our trials, ſo as to have them made beneficial to us; from which, and the experience of others, we have abundant encouragement to expect divine favour and ſucceſs.

Let us then ſee to it, that we learn all the good and profitable leſſons, which God for our benefit would have us to learn in the ſchool of affliction; for there is no doubt in the diſpenſations of providence God would have us to hear his voice and notice his hand, the rod and him that hath appointed it. But ſince people are ſo very ready to excuſe themſelves, when they are not in trouble, and think that to-morrow will be as this day and much more abundant, be you perſuaded to ſuffer a word of exhortation, and be you admoniſhed to be alſo ready; for in ſuch an hour as ye think not, your Lord may call for you. The calls of God in his providence are to all, who are under ſimilar circumſtances with thoſe, who have been removed or have met with affliction. We ourſelves are alſo in the body, and are expoſed to ſuch accidents and misfortunes, as others have ſuffered. When heads of families are taken away by death, all, who are ſuch, ought to be quickened in preparation for themſelves, and in providing for the well being, comfort, and ſafety of their families, ſhould they

be removed. Or if children are taken away by the ſtroke of death, thoſe, who are parents, would do well to obſerve the hand of God in ſuch admonitions of providence. Indeed whatever is accompliſhed by divine power is a voice to all, who hear of it, and are acquainted with the difficulties, to which human nature is expoſed; and of courſe all ſuch are called upon to have it rectified in the way, which God has provided and ſanctified for the purpoſe. What our friends and neighbours have been called to paſs through, or things ſimilar to them, we may meet with. This we are aſſured of, ſince we have been ſo effectually taught that time has hitherto been a continued ſcene of viciſſitudes, and that changes are daily taking place, and will be made to the end of this world. And that we ourſelves muſt fall victims to ſome of the ways, in which God removes people out of time into eternity, of this we have abundant evidence from what we have experienced in our own families, or have obſerved among our friends and neighbours. This will happen to us either as a natural conſequence of God's law in the conſtitution of nature, or from a variation of the effect or natural conſequence by the omnipotent Jehovah, when it falleth ſuddenly upon us; for there is no man that hath power over the ſpirit, to retain the ſpirit; neither hath he power in the day of death; and there is no diſcharge in that war.

THINGS being as they are, it becomes us religiouſly and ſubmiſſively to acquieſce in the will of the ſupreme Being, and with reſigned tempers of

mind to aſcribe righteouſneſs unto God, and ſay, whenever we are ſuffering under whatever he permits or orders, It is the Lord: let him do what ſeemeth him good. If we conduct agreeable to our profeſſions as chriſtians, we ſhall be ſtill, and know that it is God, who, either by his efficient power or permiſſive will, has ſuffered what has happened in the courſe of providence to be accompliſhed; and we ſhall confeſs that whatever he doth is right, and that it will, through the ſanctifying influences of his grace, be made to work for our benefit.

In properly noticing the hand of God, we ſhould do well to obſerve ſome of the circumſtances, which, under the divine government, have ſeparated us from our friends. Should we do this as chriſtians and wiſe men, we ſhall obſerve the very great uncertainty of preſent enjoyments, and that our greateſt ſagacity, prudence, and forethought cannot enſure ſucceſs, or ward off the fatal ſhafts of misfortune. Nothing leſs than the divine protection will ſecure us and ours; and this we cannot have from the benevolent preſerver of all things, unleſs it ſhould be for his glory and our good. Should it be otherwiſe, the infinite diſpoſer of all events will deſtroy the hope of man.

We are ſufficiently informed that the Lord doth what ſeemeth to him good, and that there is need of a religious acquieſcence under all the divine allotments, notwithſtanding they may be very grievous to us. With reſpect to our own ſituation in life, and in order that we may have a ſenſe of

what we are expoſed to, in the language of wiſdom we may obſerve, that what has been may be again, or that we are liable to misfortunes ſimilar to what others have paſſed through. Our greateſt conſolation is, that the Lord God omnipotent reigns: he governs the world; and in his providence accompliſhes that only which is proper, whether we can diſcover the wiſdom of the divine conduct or comprehend his goodneſs therein or not.

As to death, whether it is to come on us in the ſame way and manner it has on others, we know not: this is a matter of little conſequence to us: one thing we know, and that is, that God will bring us to death, the grave, the houſe appointed for all the living. As to the time when, or the form in which this king of terrors is to appear and attack us, it makes no difference to us, if we are but prepared for the event. When the hour is paſt, it is nothing but death, let the manner of removal be what it may. Preparation is the one thing needful. It ought therefore to be our endeavour and anxious care, to be in a fit poſture for the hour, when our ſpirits ſhall be required of us. In order for this, we ſhould make uſe of the means which God has put into our hands; for there is emphatically a price put into our hands to get wiſdom. Since we are favoured with the offers of pardon and acceptance through Jeſus Chriſt, the great ſacrifice of atonement, in him there is ſafety: he is the ark of ſalvation; through him and his goſpel we have a plenty of means; there is adequate proviſion made for us; and we may be hap-

py hereafter, whatever we may meet with in this life, if we improve our advantages to effect, and have all things working for our good.

If we are truly wise, we shall be fitted for the events of providence, whatever we meet with, whether it be prosperous or adverse; and it will have a good effect upon our minds, and will in the final issue prove beneficial to us. It has been observed that we have abundant provision made for our happiness, if we do but improve it. There our danger seems to lie, that we do not make the best advantage of the divine favours; for there is much depending on our endeavours to improve our talents, so as to obtain the divine approbation. It may indeed be affirmed, that there never was a man, who began in wisdom's ways in his youth, and sought the Lord by prayer, and attended religiously and conscientiously to the ordinances of God's house, and was strictly holy in his ways, trusting to the merits of the Mediator, who was not fit for receiving the will of God, and for death, his great and last change. Should such a person meet with adversity, it is generally if not always sanctified to him for his spiritual and everlasting good. And he, who is thus holy, can with a resigned disposition of mind, refer himself to God; and notwithstanding he may wish for mercy and favour, yet under distressing circumstances, in the language of submission, whilst he considers the superintendence of the divine power, he can

'Justify the ways of God to men;'

and do it much more cordially than thoſe, who are not in any meaſure reſigned or conformed to the divine will.

As to many of the trials, which we meet with, they are what may be expected from the nature of things, and from what is the common lot of the inhabitants of the world; for ſuch are the changes of this earthly ſtate, that we cannot avoid meeting with ſome of them; and the time will inevitably arrive, when our countenances will be changed, and we muſt be ſent away, when the places that now know us will know us no more for ever. This being granted, there is a neceſſity of our being prepared for all events, as far as we poſſibly can, and that we uſe all poſſible means, ſo that we may ſtand clothed with the whole armour of God, reſiſting temptations, having our lamps trimmed and burning, and fitted to be made partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light. Whilſt we are thus engaged, all proper attention ſhould be exerted for the preſervation of our own lives and the lives of others. And this, whilſt we are ſenſible that there is no means, however efficacious or powerful, which will ward off or prevent the ſtroke of death, or that will exempt us from the common and unavoidable lot of all mankind. For of man it muſt be ſaid, ſince ſin and death have been introduced into the world, it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.

If we rationally and wiſely conſider theſe things, and are happily prepared for all events,

we may then commit our ways unto the Lord, and under the moſt ſevere trials, with which we are exerciſed, ſet calm and quiet; and whilſt we are in this poſture, ſhould we meet with troubles, it will be proper for us to remember who is the author of them, or who has permitted them to overtake us. And when we are rightly informed, if we have the temper which the goſpel inculcates, or the principles which chriſtianity inſpires, we ſhall labour to be eaſy and ſubmiſſive to the righteouſneſs of the divine conduct.

FURTHERMORE, as to what we ſuffer on the account of bereavements, we may mourn for our loſſes, provided we do it, in a reſigned and religious frame of mind, ſo as that we may be cauſed thereby to reſt in a more full acquieſcence in the all-wiſe God's ſovereign diſpenſations; perſuaded that when the Lord corrects us, it is meant for our profit, and in order that we may be made wiſer and better. Happy will it be for us, if afflictions have this good effect; and this they will undoubtedly have, if we by a patient continuance in well doing ſeek for glory, and honour, and immortality. With humility and reverence therefore may we not aſcribe unto the only wiſe God, our Saviour, glory and majeſty, dominion and power, both now and ever.

A M E N.

APPENDIX.

DEACON William Chipman, late of Wellfleet, deſcended from an ancient family of Chipmans, in Sandwich. His mother was of the reſpectable family of Smiths in that town. Being left an orphan, he was put out in Wellfleet to the occupation of a carpenter. He alſo acquired the art of navigation. After ſerving his time with reputation, from a virtuous diſpoſition and an active, prudent turn of mind, he made a good member of ſociety. He married for his firſt wife a daughter of Mr. John Treat and grand daughter of the Rev. Mr. Treat of Eaſtham. By her he had his ſon William and ſeveral other children. The Rev. Mr. Treat had a number of children by his firſt wife. Their poſterity have many of them done worthily in their day. For his ſecond wife he married a daughter of the venerable Mr. Willard, of Boſton, who was for ſome time vice preſident of Harvard College. By her he had a daughter, who was the mother of the Honourable Robert Treat Paine, Eſq. Mrs. Chipman's father was half brother to Judge Paine's mother. Captain William Chipman was the eldeſt ſon of the Deacon. He was virtuouſly educated, and from his youth engaged in the ſea-ſervice. From his activity and alertneſs in buſineſs he early in life become a ſhip-maſter, and was high in repute as a

navigator. He married a daughter of Col. Eliſha Cobb, who deſcended from an ancient family in Hingham. By her he has one daughter. From Capt. Chipman's active turn of mind and the profits which he acquired by his induſtry, we anticipated the good which he might do. For he, as the family to which he belonged, was a deſpiſer of enthuſiaſm on the one hand, whilſt on the other the ſchemes of infidelity were not able to captivate his mind. He was a conſtant and devout attendant upon the regular publick worſhip of God; and when he was at home from ſea, his preſence conſtantly graced our worſhipping aſſembly. We lament his death: he was cut off in the midſt of his days. The circumſtances of his death are ſufficiently known to thoſe who have read the publick prints. Suffice it to ſay, that as a man falleth before wicked men, ſo fell Capt. Chipman, January 1ſt, 1800, in the 34th year of his age.